



PHILIPPINES

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VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES
Chairperson, Housing and Urban Development
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STATEMENT FOR THE PLENARY MEETING
United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable
Urban Development (Habitat III)

October 17, 2016, Quito, Ecuador

Your Excellency, President Rafael Correa,
Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon,
Dr. Joan Clos,
Excellencies and dear colleagues,

Let me begin by expressing our deep appreciation to the Government and people of Ecuador for their warm welcome and excellent hosting.

Mr. President,

The Philippines associates itself with the statement delivered by Thailand on behalf of G77 and China. Indeed, Habitat III is of much importance to the global development framework, as it is the first major intergovernmental conference after the landmark year of 2015, which saw the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, together the Sendai Framework, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

We welcome in this regard the New Urban Agenda, which charts our course for sustainable urban development for the next 20 years. The Philippines was privileged to be a co-facilitator in its negotiations. As co-facilitator, our aim was to ensure that the New Urban Agenda would be people-centered, inclusive, and development-oriented.

As we here at Habitat III examine how best to implement the commitments under the New Urban Agenda, we offer our National Report on “Better, Greener, Smarter Cities in an Inclusive Philippines” as our contribution to deepening the discussion and identifying emergent challenges.

Since Habitat II in 2006, the Philippines has become one of the fastest growing economies in Asia. Our economy grew 7% in the 2nd quarter of 2016, on track to meet the government’s 7% to 8% full year growth target.

However, challenges remain in terms of job creation, increased income, and reduced informal settlements. Considering that our main metropolitan areas and cities contribute 80% of our total economic output, we have put in place a more strategic, integrated approach towards sustainable urban development.

First, we will harness our demographic window of opportunity. Half of our 90 million population is below 25 years old, but young people also constitute 50% of the

country's unemployed. Investment in education and skills development for them is needed so they can become the driving force of the fast-modernizing, urban economy.

Second, we will capacitate local governments to effectively plan and deliver services to a rapidly growing urban population. Currently, we face a proliferation of informal settlements, increasing traffic congestion, and worsening pollution levels. To address these, we need urban management and decision-making that is evidence-based, including through urban information databases and systems. It is vital to build technical and financial capabilities of local governments and capitalize on our international networks to develop better urban solutions.

Third, mainstreaming climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and management in local development and land use planning and ensuring environmental integrity will be needed. As one of one of the most vulnerable in the world to disasters and the

effects of climate change, it is crucial that we build cities that are safer and more resilient, support the sustainable use and management of ecosystems, and address waste management, pollution, and emissions.

Fourth, we will promote a multi-level response to new areas of urban challenges. Some of the challenges brought about by urbanization go beyond territorial and political boundaries. Thus, interventions must not just improve local capacities but also include metropolitanization, clustering of urban centers, and multi-level governance.

Fifth, to achieve inclusive growth, we will work on spatial convergence of plans, programs, and activities and strengthen coordination between national, sub-national and local governments. The archipelagic nature of our country requires growth strategies that incorporate geographical and sectoral considerations, including strengthening the network of urban centers and improving urban-rural connectivity.

Sixth, we aim to improve access to affordable and adequate housing and enable informal settlers to live in resilient, vibrant, and connected communities.

With these, we seek to create ***Better cities*** that are globally competitive, economically vibrant and sustainable; ***Greener cities*** that are environmentally sustainable, climate resilient and safe; and ***Smarter cities*** that are connected, physically, spatially and digitally. All of these in an ***inclusive Philippines*** that is equitable, participatory, and provides access to quality services especially for the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Thank you, and the longer version of this statement will be circulated through the Habitat website.